

News Digest

By The Associated Press

Jury finds sailor guilty in slaying of lieutenant

NEWPORT, R.I. — A black Navy sailor was found guilty Thursday of premeditated murder in the fatal stabbing of a white lieutenant at sea, a verdict which could result in the Navy's first use of the death penalty since 1849.

An eight-member military jury deliberated for almost four hours before finding Petty Officer Mitchell T. Garraway Jr. guilty in the June 16, 1985, slaying of Lt. James K. Sterner aboard the USS Miller.

In closing arguments Thursday, Navy prosecutor Lt. Daniel E. O'Toole said evidence "shrieks out" that Garraway planned the stabbing death and then tried to hide his plans.

But the civilian defense lawyer, Trevor L. Brooks, said the murder was committed in a spontaneous fit of rage directed more toward authority figures than the specific victim. Brooks also said the attack stemmed in part from Garraway's perception of racism aboard ship.

"If this man intended to kill Lt. Sterner, he would have stabbed him in the heart or cut his throat," and not plunged a Marine survival knife

into his back, Brooks said.

"I'm turning over his life into your hands," he said. "I'm asking you to end this madness...with a verdict of not guilty."

The court-martial panel began deliberations

'Sterner represented an authority figure.... Something in the dark recesses of the defendant's mind caused him to react violently.'

late in the afternoon after hearing instructions on military law from Navy Judge John A. Studer.

Garraway, 21, pleaded guilty to unpremeditated murder in the slaying while in water off the Bermuda coast. His plea virtually guaranteed he would be sentenced to life imprisonment. But

the navy sought a conviction on a premeditated-murder charge, which is punishable by either a life sentence or death.

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During the arguments, Garraway sat at the defense table staring toward the jury. He did not take the stand.

O'Toole said evidence presented during five days of testimony clearly shows Garraway schemed to kill the 35-year-old officer in retaliation for delaying a promotion.

O'Toole stressed testimony by a friend of Garraway who quoted him as vowing to avenge Sterner's action with death.

The prosecutor also said Garraway purposely started a confession with the words, "I had no intention that night of killing Lt. Sterner," because he was "savvy enough" to realize the punishment would be more severe if the attack

was planned.

But Brooks argued Garraway started both a rough draft and a final copy of his admission with those words because they were true. He also said his client was a disturbed, uneducated sailor who could not distinguish between intending to kill Sterner and premeditating the act.

Brooks began his closing statement by expressing "profound sorrow" to Sterner's wife, three children and the rest of his family.

O'Toole essentially agreed with the defense motives, but said that is exactly why Garraway consciously planned to kill Sterner.

The prosecutor also said the defense was using "red herrings" to throw the jury off the scent of the premeditated nature of the attack.

But Brooks said the prosecution had presented witnesses who lied to fit the Navy's version of the case.

During the arguments, Garraway's mother and Sterner's cousin sat separately in a spectator's section, as they have every day of the court-martial at the Newport Naval Base.

Toward a Mideast Peace

Reagan administration tries low-key, step-by-step approach

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Reagan administration has fallen back on secret, step-by-step diplomacy to try to get Mideast peace talks started in 1986.

The outlook may be only marginally brighter than last year when American, Egyptian and Jordanian leaders all confidently predicted negotiations would be started, but turned out to be wrong.

This year's effort is different. It involves low-profile efforts by Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy and

his deputy, Watt Cleverius, modest claims of "incremental progress" and virtually no public announcements about their meetings and the details of their agenda.

Murphy, a tireless envoy, met separately last week in Europe with King Hussein of Jordan and Shimon Peres of Israel, two of the three key players in the Middle East.

The third, Yasser Arafat, chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, is being kept abreast of developments by Hussein, while Cleverius and other

U.S. diplomats meet regularly with Palestinians in the region.

Apparently, the Reagan administration is remaining true to the U.S. pledge to Israel not to deal with the PLO until it accepts the legitimacy of Israel and U.N. Security Council resolutions calling for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East.

Arafat, however, retains a veto over the Palestinians who would sit across the negotiating table from Israel as part of a joint delegation of Jordanians. Last May, Secretary of State George

Shultz tested the highwire with his own on-site diplomacy after seeing Hussein in Aqaba and Peres in Jerusalem. Shultz reported he had found "a genuine sense of movement."

But as the year wore on, it became clear the issues of Palestinian representation and a proper forum for peace talks could not be resolved.

Israel simply refuses to sit down with Palestinians linked to the PLO or to permit the Soviet Union, with which it has no relations, to play a key role in negotiations. Hussein and Arafat in-

sisted on both conditions.

The question now is whether Murphy and the other American diplomats can bridge the differences or come close enough to get peace talks started.

Pending is an administration arms package for Jordan that includes 40 advanced jet fighter planes and mobile missiles. Faced with a likely congressional veto, the administration withdrew the purchase last year when opponents said they wanted more proof that Hussein was willing to hold peace talks with Israel.

Reagan assures aid to Angola's Savimbi

WASHINGTON — President Reagan assured guerrilla chieftan Jonas Savimbi on Thursday he wants to be "very helpful" to his campaign to oust the Cuban-backed government in Angola, and the administration suggested it wants to give aid secretly rather than openly.

The administration reportedly is seeking up to \$15 million in aid for Savimbi, who was trained as a guerrilla fighter by Mao Tse-tung and other leaders of the Chinese revolution before forming the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola.

Savimbi's forces control one-third of Angola's territory and exercise political influence over about 60 percent of the country's 7 million people.

On the other side is a Marxist government backed by 35,000 Cuban troops and Soviet aid totaling more

than \$2 billion in recent years, according to administration estimates.

Until congressional repeal of the so-called Clark amendment last year, the United States had been banned from providing aid in Angola.

Resumption of covert aid would renew — at least partially — the role the CIA played in Angola. It was disclosure of secret CIA assistance to UNITA that led to adoption of the Clark amendment in 1967.

In contrast to the administration, key congressional leaders, including Sen. David F. Durenberger, R-Minn., chairman of the Senate intelligence committee, and Rep. Lee H. Hamilton, D-Ind., chairman of the House intelligence committee, insist that any aid to Savimbi be provided openly, subject to full congressional debate.

Aids line

OMAHA — A volunteer organization in Nebraska has started a telephone referral service to provide assistance to people with AIDS.

Raymond Hoffman, president of the Nebraska AIDS Project, said the statewide information line will be staffed daily from 6 to 11 p.m.

Hoffman said about 40 volunteers have received training on the medical aspects of the disease, emotional reactions to serious diseases and public response to AIDS.

The line also will provide information on steps that can be taken to reduce the risk of exposure to AIDS.

Nebraska residents outside of Omaha can reach the service by calling 1-800-782-2437. The service is available to Omaha residents at 342-4233.

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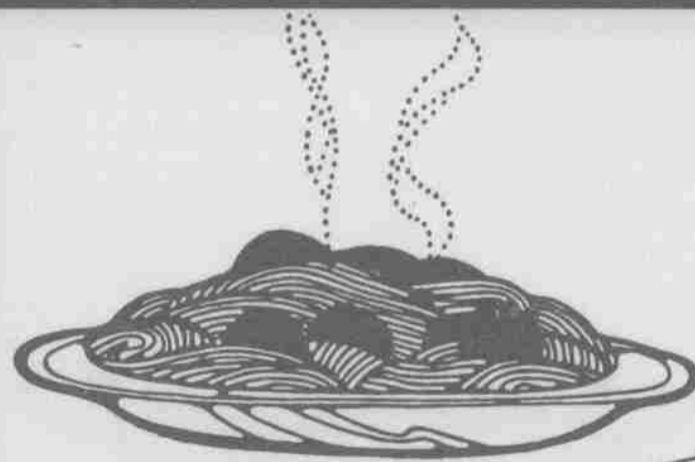
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